AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following Listing of Claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (withdrawn): A skeleton structure member made by disposing a solidified granular bulk material obtained by bonding together and thereby solidifying multiple granules inside a skeleton member of a transport machine and/or a space bounded by the skeleton member and a panel member peripheral thereto,

wherein, in the solidified granular bulk material, the granules are bonded together by surface fusion and an internal pressure is created by expansion.

Claim 2 (currently amended): A method for manufacturing a skeleton structure member made by disposing a solidified granular bulk material obtained by bonding together and thereby solidifying multiple granules inside a skeleton member of a transport machine and/or a space bounded by the skeleton member and a panel member peripheral thereto,

said method including the steps of placing granules, which are made by wrapping a core substance consisting of a liquid or a solid with a film and pre-packed into a bag or a vessel, into the skeleton member and/or space in an un-expanded state; and,

heating the granules and thereby causing the granules to expand.

Claim 3 (new): The method according to claim 1 wherein during the heating step the core substance gasifies and thereby forms hollow granules.

Claim 4 (new): The method according to claim 1 wherein upon cooling the granules that are bonded together each have an external diameter within the range of from about 10μm to about 200μm.

Claim 5 (new): The method according to claim 1 wherein the heating step is conducted at a temperature within the range of from about 130°C to about 200°C.

Claim 6 (new): The method according to claim 5 wherein the heating step is conducted on a paint drying line provided in a production line for drying paint on the transport machine.

Claim 7 (new): The method according to claim 1 wherein the skeleton structure member is a front side frame of a vehicle body.

Claim 8 (new): The method according to claim 1 wherein the skeleton structure member is a side sill of a passenger compartment of a vehicle body.

Claim 9 (new): The method according to claim 1 wherein the skeleton structure member is a front floor cross member of a vehicle body.

Claim 10 (new): The method according to claim 1 wherein the skeleton structure member is a front pillar of a vehicle body.

Claim 11 (new): The method according to claim 1 wherein the skeleton structure member is a center pillar of a vehicle body.

Claim 12 (new): The method according to claim 1 wherein the skeleton structure member is a rear pillar of a vehicle body.

Claim 13 (new): The method according to claim 1 wherein the skeleton structure member is a door beam of a vehicle body.

Claim 14 (new): The method according to claim 1 wherein the skeleton structure member is a roof side rail of a vehicle body.